

Muskrat *Ondatra zibethicus*

The muskrat is a large aquatic cousin to the vole. A versatile home builder, it may excavate a bank den along a stream or build a lodge of vegetation and mud in a pond or marsh. The muskrat feeds on a variety of aquatic plants, especially cattails. It can stay submerged for up to fifteen minutes.

Coyote *Canis latrans*

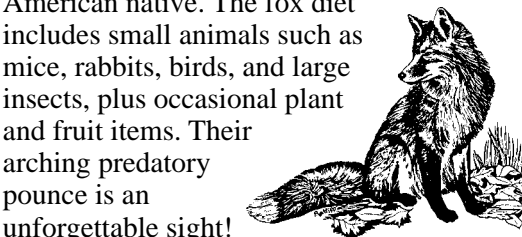
Not long after sunset the yips and yowls of this predominantly prairie animal may be heard in every county in Indiana. As in other wild canines, both parents participate in raising the young. The coyote is a predator at the top of the food chain, hunting

rabbits, birds, mice, and other small animals. They are not a threat to healthy, grown deer.

Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes*

Gray Fox *Urocyon cinereoargenteus*

The red fox has a white tipped tail, while the gray fox has a black tipped tail. Due to an absence of any early records, there was some question about the red fox’s status as a native species. Some believed it was introduced from Europe. Today, most mammalogists consider it to be a North American native. The fox diet includes small animals such as mice, rabbits, birds, and large insects, plus occasional plant and fruit items. Their arching predatory pounce is an unforgettable sight!



Raccoon *Procyon lotor*

From the Algonquin Indian word “arakunem” meaning “hand-scratcher”, the raccoon is thought to wash food to make it easier to swallow. Preferring stream or pond environments, raccoons feed on crayfish, frogs, insects, fruits, and berries. Around people they are very bold and no food bearing picnic cooler or garbage can is safe from their nimble paws.

Mink *Mustela vison*

This large member of the weasel family is well known for its lustrous brown fur. A “boar” mink (male) will occupy a territory for about ten months, then move on to establish another. Using its keen sense of smell, the mink forages at night for frogs, fish, and other aquatic animals. Though mainly nocturnal, mink move about and may sometimes be seen on cloudy days.



Striped Skunk *Mephitis mephitis*

Infamous creature of the night, the skunk feeds widely on insects, grubs, bird eggs, small animals, nuts and fruit. If its bluff of shuffling and growling fails to ward off a threat, the skunk may bend its body into a U shape, with both head and rear facing the intruder, and unleash the foul, lingering spray that we all recognize. This defense is accurate up to fifteen feet!



White-tailed Deer

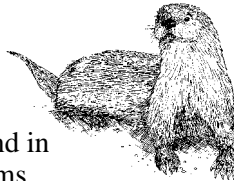
Odocoileus virginianus
Indiana’s original deer herd was eliminated from the state by the year 1900. Reintroduction started in 1934 leading to the present day statewide abundance. Deer feed year round on the buds and young stems of trees and bushes. In spring and summer their

diet also includes lush green plants, with nuts and fruits added in autumn. One to three fawns are born in spring following the autumn mating season.

River Otters? Bobcats?

The river otter (*Lutra canadensis*) is making a comeback in Indiana, thanks to the IDNR Nongame and Endangered Species Program. River otters, once gone from the state, were reintroduced at Tippecanoe River State Park, Patoka and Salamonie Reservoirs and in several other river systems throughout the state.

Small populations of the eastern bobcat, (*Lynx rufus*) once thought to be nearly gone from the state, are being monitored closely in southern Indiana by the Division of Fish and Wildlife.



Extirpated Mammals

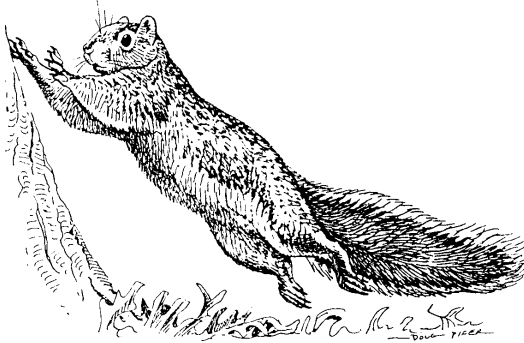
These mammals are well known from our country’s history and cultural lore. They inhabited wilderness Indiana but were eliminated by settlement.

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| Porcupine | Fisher |
| Black Bear | Gray (Timber) Wolf |
| Mountain Lion | Bison (Buffalo) |
| Elk | |

Looking for More Information?

- There are lots of great books to help you identify mammals and understand their habits and habitats. These include:
- *Peterson Field Guide to Mammals*
 - *Stokes Guide to Animal Tracking and Behavior*
 - *Mammals of Indiana*
 - *Peterson Field Guide to Animal Tracks*
 - *A Key-Guide to Mammal Skulls and Lower Jaws*
 - *Audubon Society Pocket Guide to Mammals*

Common Mammals of State Parks and Reservoirs



Fox Squirrel

DNR

Indiana Department of Natural Resources
Division of State Parks and Reservoirs
Interpretive Services
402 W. Washington Room W298
Indianapolis, IN 46204
317-232-4124

The mission of the Interpretive Services is to provide information and offer interpretive experiences with Indiana's natural and cultural resources to visitors, staff and a diverse public.

Our Wildlife Heritage

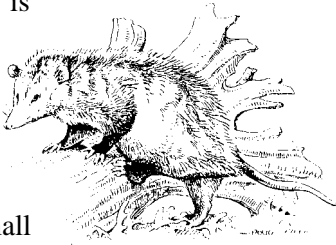
Historically, Indiana contained prairie grasslands, deciduous forests, and wetlands such as wet prairies, marshes, and swamps. These natural plant communities were home to sixty-two species of mammals. Today these habitat types remain, but in greatly diminished fragmented parcels quite unlike the vast expanses of earlier days. Fifty-five mammal species are now known to inhabit the state. The Division of State Parks and Reservoirs manages 177, 000 acres of land representing all three major habitat types. This list includes the mammals that you are most apt to see.

Avoid approaching a wild animal too closely. It is against Indiana law for visitors to feed wild animals on IDNR lands. Enjoy them from a distance--and remember that they are wild!

Virginia Opossum

Didelphis virginiana

The “possum” is North America’s only marsupial or pouched animal, related to the kangaroos of Australia. An opossum is so small at birth that two dozen



could fit in a teaspoon! The young stay in the pouch, nursing and growing for ten weeks. Of course, the opossum is famous for its “playing dead” defense, complete with gaping mouth and limp body!

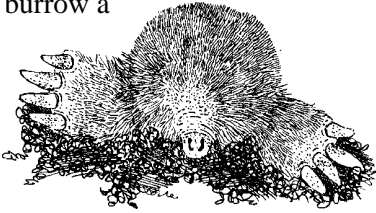
Short-tailed Shrew

Blarina brevicauda

Among the smallest of mammals, this four inch long sprite weighs only as much as six pennies. The shrew has an enormous appetite for insects, earthworms, slugs, and snails, and eats almost double its weight in food daily.

Eastern Mole *Scalopus aquaticus*

The mole uses powerful front legs with broad feet to burrow a few inches beneath the woodland surface (or perhaps your lawn!) in search of insects and worms. Active year round, it may easily eat half its weight in food daily to fuel its strenuous life style.



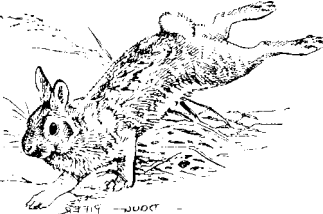
Bats

Of the twelve species of bats known to occur in Indiana, the big brown bat, *Eptesicus fuscus*, and little brown, *Myotis lucifugus*, are the most familiar. They are the “attic bats”. Red bats, *Lasiurus borealis*, are also common. Bats are the only mammals capable of true flight. They have good eyes, but use the echoes of high pitched vocalizations to direct their night flight and insect foraging activity. The enormous number of insects consumed by bats directly benefits our agricultural interests. Contrary to popular belief, very few bats carry rabies.

Eastern Cottontail Rabbit

Sylvilagus floridanus

Rabbits are most active from sunset to sunrise (nocturnal). Food preferences include lush green plants and the buds and bark of woody plants. Females line bowl shaped nests with fur and grasses, annually producing several litters of four or five young each. Leave baby rabbits alone! Their mother is not far away, even if you can’t see her!



Eastern Chipmunk *Tamias striatus*

This small ground squirrel with the white “racing stripe” has a habit of cocking its tail straight up as it runs! Listen in forest areas for their high pitched “chip” sounding the alarm at your presence.



Woodchuck *Marmota monax*

The woodchuck (groundhog) awaking from hibernation is celebrated in American folklore as a harbinger of winter’s end. It is the largest of North America’s true hibernators. In late summer the woodchuck feeds constantly, putting on the half inch of body fat which will sustain it during the coming winter.



Fox Squirrel *Sciurus niger*

Gray Squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis*

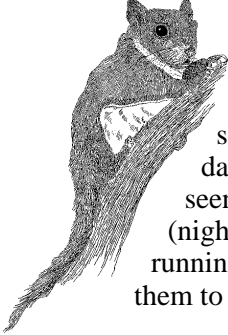
The orange flanked fox squirrel prefers open wood lots and forest edges. Gray squirrels are denizens of the deep. unbroken forest. In today’s fragmented woodlands both may be found in over lapping home ranges. It was the gray squirrel which figured so highly in pioneer table fare.



Southern Flying Squirrel

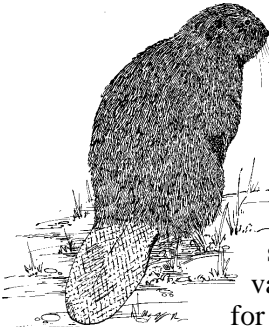
Glaucomys volans

Feeding by night and sleeping in hollow tree dens by day, these small squirrels are rarely seen due to their strictly nocturnal (night time) habits. Flaps of skin running from front to back legs allow them to glide (not fly) among the trees.



Beaver

Castor canadensis

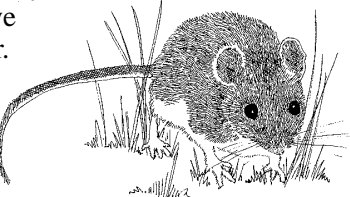


Weighing 30 to 70 pounds, the beaver is Indiana’s largest rodent. A broad flat tail, webbed feet, and special ear and nose valves equip the beaver for life in ponds and streams. A single beaver can fell hundreds of trees each year to provide food and material for lodges and dams.

White-footed Mouse

Peromyscus leucopus

Unlike the gray house mouse which is an import from Europe, these native mice possess white bellies and brown fur above. Nests of soft grasses and downy materials are often found in low tree cavities, wood piles, and even atop low lying bird nests in bushes. White-footed mice may have three or four litters per year with four or five young per litter. They are endlessly pursued as food by predators.



Meadow Vole *Microtus ochrogaster*

These small mouse-like mammals of meadows and grassy areas are among the most prolific breeders in nature. Litters of four to seven young are produced almost monthly from March to December, with the young weaned at twelve days and capable of reproducing at twenty-five days of age! As with the mice, voles figure highly in the diets of predators such as hawks and foxes.

